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March 14, 2014

Re: Bill No. RHB 5562 Section 1 "AN Act Concerning Special Education"

Position: SUPPORT

I am a Connecticut resident and a former public school teacher, having taught in several schools within the city Milford for over thirty-five years, in the field of Special Education, grades K-12.

Currently, I am volunteering time every week to tutor adults, with the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury.

My experiences as a classroom teacher, a tutor, and a Learning Disabilities specialist, have only served to support my conviction that *early intervention for dyslexia*, or the inability to read even after extensive instruction and opportunities to practice, *is an essential service*, and should be considered so in order to ensure appropriate education for all students.

Recently I was asked to give my professional assessment for a 5th grade girl who was still reading on a Primer level, albeit writing above grade level and exhibiting a work ethic and social maturity well beyond her years. In my opinion, the fact that a bright and hard-working student could not have access to specialized instruction because there is currently no label box on the IEP form for SLD-Dyslexia, is troubling. This child's frustration level was very high and threatened to discourage her continued efforts, and therefore limit her chances of reaching her potential in adulthood.

The professionals teaching children in the general education classrooms should be given opportunities to learn about dyslexia. Informed teachers can oftentimes offer the most intensive and effective interventions within the classroom setting, and/or become their student's advocate for acquiring specialized instruction when it is deemed appropriate. Teachers with whom I have worked have been hungry for intervention strategies. I am reminded of the comments by teacher Kyle Redford, in his article, Kids Can't Wait: "More importantly, these strategies help me address the access gap between the haves and the have-nots with learning issues in my class." (2014. *The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity*).

Currently I am concerned with the limited identification and access to interventions for students with dyslexia in our Connecticut Public Schools. By as early as 4th grade, instruction depends heavily on the expectation that students can read with enough fluency to learn new information, and read longer selections for both academic learning and pleasure.

I respectfully ask that you pass this legislation for the benefit of the many students who struggle with dyslexia in our public schools.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of my opinion.

Sincerely,

Patricia Babina